

selecting initial symbols to be arrayed in said separate boxes of said multiple symbol columns and rows on said touch screen monitor;

displaying the initial symbols selected in an array of separate boxes of multiple symbol columns and rows on said monitor;

allowing the player to designate a chosen number, from none to all, of said initial displayed symbols for replacement by touching appropriate symbols, boxes and/or instructions on said touch screen;

81 selecting said chosen number of replacement symbols;

replacing said chosen number of initial symbols on said monitor with replacement symbols;

determining whether said replacement symbols and any remaining initial symbols arrayed in said separate boxes of said multiple symbol columns and rows constitute a winning combination; and,

rewarding a winning combination.

2. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein game play is only commenced if it is determined that an appropriate amount of money has been inserted into the gaming apparatus.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said symbols are randomly selected by a microprocessor.

4. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein symbols are designated for replacement and replaced on multiple occasions before it is determined whether a winning combination exists.

22 E

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the option is provided of designating no symbols for replacement.

6. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein only one symbol can be designated for replacement.

7. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein multiple symbols can be designated for replacement.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein a list of winning combinations is stored in a memory and compared to the combination displayed on said monitor to determine if there is a winning combination.

E1 9. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said touch screen box lights up when the player designates its symbol for replacement.

10. (Amended) The method of claim 5 wherein the player can touch an instruction on said touch screen to indicate that none of the initial symbols should be replaced.

11. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein, after the player has designated the chosen number of symbols to be replaced, the player touches an instruction to actuate replacement of the chosen number of symbols.

12. (Amended) The method of claim 9 wherein the player can undesignated a symbol for replacement by touching that designated symbol or its box a second time.

13. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein each said replacement symbol is selected from a group which includes the initial symbol it replaces.

14.  
15. (Thrice Amended) The method of claim 11 wherein said instruction to actuate replacement is located said touch screen.

23

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<sup>15</sup>  
~~16~~. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein a symbol is immediately replaced as soon as the player touches said symbol or its box on said touch screen.

<sup>16</sup>  
~~17~~. (Amended) The method of claim 11 wherein said instruction to actuate replacement is located on a button residing outside said touch screen.

<sup>17</sup>  
~~18~~. (Five Times Amended) A method of operating an electronic gaming apparatus having a plurality of symbols and background colors arrayed in separate boxes of multiple columns and rows on a touch screen monitor comprising the steps of:

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selecting initial symbols and initial background colors for said symbols to be so arrayed in said separate boxes of said multiple columns and rows on said touch screen monitor;

allowing the player to designate a chosen number, from none to all, of said initial symbols and initial background colors for replacement by touching appropriate symbols, boxes and/or instructions on said touch screen;

selecting said chosen number of replacement symbols and background colors;

replacing said chosen number of initial symbols and initial background colors on said monitor with replacement symbols and replacement background colors; and,

determining whether said replacement symbols and replacement background colors, together with any remaining initial symbols and initial background colors arrayed in said separate boxes of said multiple columns and rows, constitute a winning combination; and,

rewarding a winning combination.

24 E

<sup>18</sup>  
~~19~~. The method of claim <sup>17</sup>~~18~~ wherein said replacement background colors are chosen independently of said replacement symbols.

<sup>19</sup>  
~~20~~. (Four Times Amended) An electronic gaming apparatus comprising:

a touch screen monitor for displaying a plurality of symbols arrayed in separate boxes of multiple symbol columns and rows;

a memory which stores a list of possible symbols to be displayed on said monitor;

E1 a microprocessor to select symbols from said memory for display on said monitor and to determine whether a final group of displayed symbols creates a winning or losing game;

a first switch to initiate game play by causing the microprocessor to select an initial set of symbols and display those initial symbols arrayed in separate boxes of multiple symbol columns and rows on said monitor; and,

a second switch to complete game play by allowing the player to choose for replacement from none to all of said initial symbols by touching appropriate symbols, boxes and/or instructions on said touch screen and have said microprocessor randomly select said replacement symbols from a list of possible symbols in said memory and then display on said monitor said replacement symbols together with any remaining initial symbols to create said final group of displayed symbols arrayed in separate boxes of multiple symbol columns and rows.

<sup>20</sup>  
<sup>19</sup>  
~~21~~. (Amended) The electronic gaming apparatus of claim <sup>19</sup>~~20~~ wherein said player chooses initial symbols for replacement by designating which initial symbols to replace.

25

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<sup>21</sup>  
~~22~~. The electronic gaming apparatus of claim <sup>19</sup>~~20~~ wherein said player chooses initial symbols for replacement by designating which initial symbols should be kept and then allowing said electronic gaming apparatus to replace all non-designated symbols.

<sup>22</sup>  
~~23~~. The electronic gaming apparatus of claim <sup>19</sup>~~20~~ wherein said player can designate one or more columns of initial symbols for replacement.

<sup>23</sup>  
~~24~~. The electronic gaming apparatus of claim <sup>22</sup>~~23~~ wherein said columns of initial symbols have the appearance of reels on a mechanical reel type of slot machine.

<sup>24</sup>  
~~25~~. The electronic gaming apparatus of claim <sup>19</sup>~~20~~ wherein said player can designate one or more rows of initial symbols for replacement.

<sup>25</sup>  
~~26~~. The electronic gaming apparatus of claim <sup>19</sup>~~20~~ wherein nine symbols are arrayed in three rows and three columns.

<sup>26</sup>  
~~27~~. (Amended) The electronic gaming apparatus of claim <sup>19</sup>~~20~~ wherein said touch screen box lights up when the player designates its symbol for replacement.

<sup>27</sup>  
~~28~~. (Amended) The electronic gaming apparatus of claim <sup>26</sup>~~27~~ wherein the player can touch an instruction on said touch screen to indicate that none of the initial symbols should be replaced.

<sup>28</sup>  
~~29~~. (Amended) The electronic gaming apparatus of claim <sup>19</sup>~~20~~ wherein only one symbol can be chosen for replacement.

<sup>29</sup>  
~~30~~. (Amended) The electronic gaming apparatus of claim <sup>19</sup>~~20~~ wherein multiple symbols can be chosen for replacement.

<sup>30</sup>  
~~31~~. (Amended) A method of operating an electronic gaming apparatus having a plurality of symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows on its monitor comprising the steps of:

240

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selecting initial symbols to be arrayed in said multiple symbol columns and rows;

displaying the initial symbols selected in an array of multiple symbol columns and rows on said monitor;

allowing the player to designate a chosen number, from one to all, of said initial displayed symbols for replacement;

selecting said chosen number of replacement symbols;

replacing said chosen number of initial symbols on said monitor with replacement symbols;

E2 determining whether said replacement symbols and any remaining initial symbols arrayed in said multiple symbol columns and rows constitute a winning combination by assessing whether particular symbols are aligned horizontally, vertically, diagonally or in another geometric pattern which matches a predetermined winning combination; and,

rewarding a winning combination.

31  
32. (Amended) An electronic gaming apparatus comprising:

a touch screen monitor for displaying a plurality of symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows;

a memory which stores a list of possible symbols to be displayed on said monitor;

a microprocessor to select symbols from said memory for display on said monitor and to determine whether a final group of displayed symbols creates a winning or losing game by assessing whether particular symbols are aligned horizontally,

vertically, diagonally or in another geometric pattern which matches a predetermined winning combination;

a first switch to initiate game play by causing the microprocessor to select an initial set of symbols and display those initial symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows on said monitor; and,

a second switch to complete game play by allowing the player to choose for replacement from none to all of said initial symbols by touching appropriate symbols, boxes and/or instructions on said touch screen monitor and have said microprocessor randomly select said replacement symbols from a list of possible symbols in said memory and then display on said monitor said replacement symbols together with any remaining initial symbols to create said final group of displayed symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows.

62  
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33. A method of operating an electronic gaming apparatus having a plurality of symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows on its monitor comprising the steps of:

selecting initial symbols to be arrayed in said multiple symbol columns and rows;

displaying the initial symbols selected in an array of multiple symbol columns and rows on said monitor after a display of a simulated spinning motion;

designating a chosen number, from one to all, of said initial displayed symbols for replacement;

selecting said chosen number of replacement symbols;

replacing said chosen number of initial symbols on said monitor with replacement symbols after the display of a simulated spinning motion;

determining whether said replacement symbols and any remaining initial symbols arrayed in said multiple symbol columns and rows constitute a winning combination; and,

rewarding a winning combination.

33

~~34~~. (Amended) An electronic gaming apparatus comprising:

a touch screen monitor for displaying a plurality of symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows;

a memory which stores a list of possible symbols to be displayed on said monitor;

62 a microprocessor to select symbols from said memory for display on said monitor and to determine whether a final group of displayed symbols creates a winning or losing game;

a first switch to initiate game play by causing the microprocessor to select an initial set of symbols and, after using a simulated spinning motion, display those initial symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows on said monitor; and,

a second switch to complete game play by allowing the player to choose for replacement from none to all of said initial symbols by touching appropriate symbols, boxes and/or instructions on said touch screen and have said microprocessor randomly select said replacement symbols from a list of possible symbols in said memory and then display on said monitor, after using a simulated spinning motion, said replacement symbols together with any remaining initial symbols to create said final group of displayed symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows.

29

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34  
35. (Amended) A method of operating an electronic gaming apparatus having a plurality of symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows on its monitor so as to appear to be on a plurality of vertical reels comprising the steps of:

selecting initial symbols to be arrayed in said multiple symbol columns and rows;

displaying the initial symbols selected in an array of multiple symbol columns and rows on said monitor so as to appear to be on a plurality of vertical reels;

designating a chosen number, from one to all, of said initial displayed symbols for replacement;

selecting said chosen number of replacement symbols;

replacing said chosen number of initial symbols on said monitor with replacement symbols;

determining whether said replacement symbols and any remaining initial symbols arrayed in said multiple symbol columns and rows constitute a winning combination; and,

rewarding a winning combination.

35

36. (Amended) An electronic gaming apparatus comprising:

a touch screen monitor for displaying a plurality of symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows so as to appear to be on a plurality of vertical reels;

a memory which stores a list of possible symbols to be displayed on said monitor;

30

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a microprocessor to select symbols from said memory for display on said monitor and to determine whether a final group of displayed symbols creates a winning or losing game;

Er a first switch to initiate game play by causing the microprocessor to select an initial set of symbols and display those initial symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows on said monitor; and,

a second switch to complete game play by allowing the player to choose for replacement from none to all of said initial symbols by touching appropriate symbols, boxes and/or instructions on said touch screen and have said microprocessor randomly select said replacement symbols from a list of possible symbols in said memory and then display on said monitor said replacement symbols together with any remaining initial symbols to create said final group of displayed symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows.

#### REMARKS

Claims 1-13 and 15-36 remain in this case for consideration. Claims 1, 6-7, 9-12, 15-18, 20, 27-30, 32, 34 and 36 have been amended. A "Version With Markings To Show Changes Made To The Claims" is presented on a separate sheet at the conclusion of this Amendment.

#### B. Prior Art Rejections

##### 1. The Invention

Applicant has invented a variation of the popular electronic slot machine game in which up to all of the electronically generated symbols arrayed in multiple symbol columns and rows can be individually replaced after an initial array of symbols is generated. An apparatus to implement Applicant's electronic slot machine game preferably includes a touch screen monitor for displaying the array of symbols, a memory